Debate with Grand Ayatollah Montazeri Part 1

The young age of Ayesha

Question no. 1

Muhammad married Ayesha when she was 6-years old and consumed his marriage with her when she was 9-years-old. How could a 54 year-old man calling himself the messenger God have sexual feelings for a 9-year-old girl?

1- Ayatollah Montazeri

In those days the tradition of Marriage was based on tribal customs and rituals. The objective of marriage was mainly to foster friendship with the father of the bride and therefore the marriage of the Prophet with Ayesha was a political move.

Sina.

This is not a good excuse to marry an underage child. I am not bothered of the marriage of the prophet with a daughter of Abu Bakr, but the fact that Ayesha was a child. It is not proper for a messenger of God to have sexual feelings for a little girl and it is unconscionable to act on them. In this day and age if a 54-year-old man has an intercourse with a 9-year-old girl he will be jailed and despised as a pedophile. Why should the Prophet be forgiven?

2. Ayatollah Montazeri.

The Prophet at the age of 25 married Khadijah, a woman who was 40-years-old and did not marry with another woman as long as she was alive. If the Prophet was a lustful man, he would not have married with an older woman and stay faithful to her all her life.

Sina:

Khadijah was a wealthy woman and the Prophet was a poor employee of her. Marrying a wealthy woman for him was climbing the ladder of social status. At that age, he was an orphan boy with little ambitions. Being a poor young man, no one paid attention to him. Kadijah was to him a boon. She gave him the comfort and the ease of mind from financial worries. Now he could afford to retreat to his cave and let his imagination fly; meet Jinns, battle with Satan, converse with Gabriel, and other creatures that haunted his feeble mind.

The fact that he remained faithful to Khadijah was not due to his chastity or loyalty but because she was a powerful woman and would not have tolerated infidelity from him. At that

time Muhammad had no followers and he would have lost everything if he had offended his wealthy wife. That would have destroyed him completely.

However, he showed his true colors when he came to power and virtually nothing could stop him from doing what he pleased. It was then that he broke all the norms of the decency by the leave of his Allah.

3- Ayatollah Montazeri.

The Prophets intention in marrying numerous old and widowed women, apart from sociopolitical considerations, was to foster their social status. Those were the days when women, especially slave girls, had little or no value and ignorance was such that they used to burry their daughters alive.

Sina.

The Prophet married Khadijah, as I explained above, for her wealth. After her death he married Ayesha who was only 6 years old and due to Abu Bakr's request did not consummate his marriage with her for three years. During this time he needed a woman and the non-believers would not marry him as they thought he was a lunatic. Among his handful of followers there were few eligible women to whom he could marry. Sauda was a Muslim woman and a widow. She was ideal under the circumstances. She could warm his bed and take care of his home and needs. He married her two months after the death of Kahdijah. Khadijah and Sauda were the only wives of the Prophet, with whom he married not for lust but out of necessity. Hafza, the daughter of Omar also may have not been very beautiful according to her own father and the Prophet may have married her to please him and for political reasons. Every one of his other wives was a beautiful virgin or a beautiful divorcee or widow. Majority, if not all of them were in their teens. Prophet married them or simply slept with them without marrying them only because of their looks. Some times he had to bend few rules and even bring Allah to reveal some verses for him in order to allow him get what he wanted. As was in the case of Zeinab Bent Jahsh, Maryah and Ayesha. None of his wives were suffering from malnutrition or were lonely poor widows prior to marrying him. The stories of Safiyah, Maryah and Zeinab are love stories, flavored with lust, betrayal and crime.

You also correctly described the deplorable condition of the slave girls in those days, but you forgot to mention that many of these slave girls were free people before the Prophet took away their freedom and reduced them into slaves. Are you saying that the slave girls should have been grateful to the Prophet for killing their loved ones and sell them in the markets to a Muslim who would use them as a maid and a sex slave?

4- Ayatollah Montazeri

The marriage of the Prophet with Ayesha took place in the first or second year of the Hijra at the insistence of her father Abu Bakr and some of his friends. The Prophet, for sometimes

after the death of Khadijah, remained single. His main objective in accepting this marriage was for political reasons. The reason for this marriage was that the Prophet was under the intense pressure by his enemies like Abu Lahab and Abu Jahl and was completely dependant of the protection of other tribes. Abu Bakr had a lot of tribal influence. And rejecting his offer, in those conditions, for the Prophet was not prudent. In reality this marriage was symbolic and not to satisfy his sexual instinct, because, as a rule a 53-year-old man cannot have sexual feelings for a 9-year-old girl.

Sina

The Prophet did not marry Ayesha at the insistence of her father. There are many Hadithes that show it was the Prophet who desired Ayesha and asked Abu Bakr to give him his then 6-year-old daughter for marriage. In fact Abu Barkr was shocked by such a request. He objected that he was a foster brother to the Prophet, which would have made such a marriage illicit. But the Prophet dismissed his concern saying that they were not real blood brothers and their oath of brotherhood was of no relevance in this case.

> Sahih Bukhari 7.18
> *Narrated 'Ursa:*
> *The Prophet asked Abu Bakr for 'Aisha's hand in marriage. Abu Bakr said "But I am your brother." The Prophet said, "You are my brother in Allah's religion and His Book, but she (Aisha) is lawful for me to marry."*

Arabs were a primitive lot with little rules to abide. Yet they had some code of ethics that they honored scrupulously. For example, although they fought all the year round, they abstained from hostilities during certain holy months of the year. They also considered Mecca to be a holy city and did not make war against it. A foster son’s wife was deemed to be a daughter-in-law and they would not marry her. Also it was costmary that close friends made a pact of brotherhood and considered each other as true brothers. The Prophet disregarded all of these rules anytime they stood between him and his interests or wishes.

Abu Bakr and Muhammad had pledged to each other to be brothers. So according to their costumes Ayesha was supposed to be like a niece to the Holy Prophet. Yet that did not stop him to ask her hand even when she was only six years old.

But this moral relativist Prophet would use the same excuse to reject the daughter of Hamza who was also a foster brother to the Prophet because she was not very pretty.

Sahih Bukhari V.7, B62, N. 37
Narrated Ibn 'Abbas:
It was said to the Prophet, "Won't you marry the daughter of Hamza?" He said, "She is my foster niece (brother's daughter). "

In the following Hadith the Prophet confided to Ahesha that he had dreamed of her before asking her hand from her father.

Sahih Bukhari 9.140
Narrated 'Aisha:
Allah's Apostle said to me, "You were shown to me twice (in my dream) before I married you. I saw an angel carrying you in a silken piece of cloth, and I said to him, 'Uncover (her),' and behold, it was you. I said (to myself), 'If this is from Allah, then it must happen.' Then you were shown to me, the angel carrying you in a silken piece of cloth, and I said (to him), 'Uncover (her), and behold, it was you. I said (to myself), 'If this is from Allah, then it must happen.' "

The excuse that this marriage was "political" can be also dismissed easily. Abu Bakr was a good friend of the Prophet; he was one of his followers and his foster brother, he belonged to the same tribe of the Prophet; there was no need for the Apostle of Allah to sleep with his little daughter in order to foster his friendship. The evidence shows that the holy Prophet took advantage of this man's devotion and abused the trust that he had in him and coerced him into giving his little girl in marriage to him. How could you deny the request of a man whom you believe to be a messenger of God?

Abu Jahl (the father of ignorance) was a derogatory nicknames given to Abul Hakam (the father of erudiciton). It's difficult to see in what ways sleeping with a 9-year-old girl would have protected the Prophet from him? As you said this marriage took place one or two years after Hijra. His enemies were in Mecca. Even if such a marriage could have protected the Prophet, which is absurd, he was already safe in Medina, so that alibi is unacceptable.

Anyway, the point is not that the Prophet married a daughter of Abu Bakr. The point is that he had sex with a 9-year-old child. If you say it was done to protect himself, then the Prophet was an opportunist who raped a little girl to save his own life. Please don't say it was not rape because a 9-year-old child is not mature enough to consent and if she cannot consent it is rape. Your defense incriminates the messenger of Allah even more than my accusations.

You said that the marriage was symbolic. How symbolic it could be if the Prophet approached Ayesha when she, according to her own testimony, was still playing with her toys and gave her a completely different kind of toy to play with that "SURPRISED" that little girl?

Sahih Bukhari Volume 7, Book 62, Number 90
Narrated Aisha:
When the Prophet married me, my mother came to me and made me enter the house (of the Prophet) and NOTHING SURPRISED ME BUT THE COMING OF ALLAH'S APOSTLE TO ME IN THE FORENOON.

You wrote, "As a rule a 53-year-old man cannot have sexual feelings for a 9-year-old girl." That is absolutely true. This is precisely my point. Unfortunately we are not living in a perfect world and there are people who are psychologically disturbed and violate the rules. Even today there are old men who fantasize having sex with small children, keep their photos and

exchange them on the Internet. They are known as pedophiles and to protect our children we put them in jail. If the Prophet hadn't "surprised" that little girl in the same forenoon that her mother took her to his house, I could have accepted that the marriage was "symbolic", even though its merits are not clear. But when we see that the Apostle of Allah consummated his marriage with that little girl in the same day that she was taken to him, it is hard to see it as "symbolic"; symbol of what?

5- Ayatollah Montazeri.

There is no doubt that the climatic conditions influence the physical and psychological growth of girls and their growth are more accelerated in hot climates.

Sina:

In the previous point you explained that the marriage was symbolic and "as a rule a 53-year-old man cannot have sexual feelings for a 9-year-old girl". But now you are approaching from a totally different angle.

I am afraid 9-year-old girls in Arabia are still 9-year-old children. Unless you advance a scientific evolutionary theory that human race has undergone a huge mutation during these 1400 years and in those days women reached adulthood at the age of 9, the fact remains that the Prophet had sexual feelings for an underage girl and this was wrong. To be convinced that 9-year-old children were always children, even during the time of the Prophet, we do not have to look farther than another Hadith narrated by Ayesha herself. In the following hadith Ayesha is revealing that she was playing on a swing when her mother took her to the Prophet.

> `[Sunan Abu-Dawud Book 41, Number 4915]` `(http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/fundamentals/hadithsunnah/abudawud/041.sat.html#041.4915)`, also `[Number 4915]` `(http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/fundamentals/hadithsunnah/abudawud/041.sat.html#041.4916)` and `[Number 4915]` `(http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/fundamentals/hadithsunnah/abudawud/041.sat.html#041.4917)`
> *Narrated Aisha, Ummul Mu'minin:*
> *The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) married me when I was seven or six. When we came to Medina, some women came, according to Bishr's version: Umm Ruman came to me when I was swinging. They took me, made me prepared and decorated me. I was then brought to the Apostle of Allah (pbuh), and he took up cohabitation with me when I was nine. She halted me at the door, and I burst into laughter.*

And used to play with her dolls.

Sahih Bukhari Volume 8, Book 73, Number 151
Narrated 'Aisha:
I used to play with the dolls in the presence of the Prophet, and my girl friends also used to

play with me. When Allah's Apostle used to enter (my dwelling place) they used to hide themselves, but the Prophet would call them to join and play with me. (The playing with the dolls and similar images is forbidden, but it was allowed for 'Aisha at that time, as she was a little girl, not yet reached the age of puberty.) (Fateh-al-Bari page 143, Vol.13)

Sahih Muslim Book 008, Number 3327:
'A'isha (Allah be pleased with her) reported that Allah's Apostle (may peace be upon him) married her when she was seven years old, and he was taken to his house as a bride when she was nine, and her dolls were with her; and when he (the Holy Prophet) died she was eighteen years old.

As a rule one would say that if she was still playing with her dolls, she was not mature enough to learn about sex, first hand, from a man who could be her grandfather.

6- Ayatollah Montazeri.

The difference of age between men, and the women they married, in the primitive societies, was acceptable and customary. Also it was not indecent or lewd for older men to marry very young girls and people of those days did not deem that to be something immoral. Even up to this day, one can find marriages with very young girls among the Arabs. As a rule one should not compare the customs of the primitive and tribal societies with the customs of the modern and advanced societies of today.

Sina

I agree that primitive societies had some customs that are shocking to our modern sensitivity. Primitive people did a lot of things that appall us today. They had, human and animal sacrifices; practiced gender discrimination, slavery and many forms of abuses of human rights. I am not condemning primitive societies for they did not know better. I am condemning modern people who follow those primitive societies by following the examples of a man who was just a product of his primitive society. I am condemning a man who called himself the Prophet of Allah, the “Mercy of God in the worlds” Rahmatu’llah lil Alamin” and the example for all mankind, who instead of setting the example of morality and rectitude followed the customs of his primitive society and thus reaffirmed them and perpetuated them as something to emulate. I am condemning a society that has forgotten its own past splendor and glory and is now trying to copy the customs of a primitive society and wants to establish their primeval precepts by following their prophet who had nothing new to add to that primitive society bur was a product of it.

Yes, we should not compare the customs of the primitive and tribal societies with the customs of the modern and advanced societies of today. But why should we emulate them? Why should we follow them? Why should we accept their prophet who was incapable to break away from that primitiveness, barbarity and savagery?

If the Prophet was truly a prophet, he would have acted differently. He would have not followed the customs of his primitive society but would have set a new standard. If he

followed the example of his primitive society why are we following him? On one hand the Muslims of the world study Muhammad's life meticulously, try to imitate him in everything he did. They dress like him, shave like him, walk like him and talk like him, do as he did and live as he lived. They believe everything he did, was ordained by God and he was sent to be the example to all humanity. Yet you say that he did just what his ignorant and primitive society used to do and we should forgive his sins because he was just a victim of that society. How pitiful are we who have not seen this yet. Look what has befallen to our mighty nation that has forsaken its own past glory and is now blindly following a man who followed the customs of his primitive society. Could we sink deeper than this? Is there any humiliation more denigrating than this?

7- Ayatollah Montazeri

The issues of each time and place must be viewed according to the standards of their own time and place and not according to standards of other times and places. On the other hand we find that the Prophet (pbuh) practically did not confront with many customs of his own time that were not in contrast with the educational and spiritual goals of Islam, but dealt with them gradually and with realism in order to slowly eradicate them.

Sina

I agree that issues should be apprised in the context of to their own time and place. Something that was acceptable 1400 years ago in Arabia may not look that good today. Perhaps we should not judge those people so harshly. But the question is why should we follow them? The solutions that were appropriate then are no more suitable for our time. Why follow a doctrine that has lost its utility and is stuck in history?

Muslims are advised to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet. You say that the Prophet was an Arab, following the traditions of his own people, so what he did was right in that context. But by following him now aren't we perpetuating those unfit and outdated customs of those Arabs of 1400 years ago?

You affirm that the Prophet did not confront those bad customs that were not in contrast with spiritual and educational goals of Islam. My question is then, what are the spiritual and educational goals of Islam? What is the main goal of Islam anyway? The Muslim's answer is of course, to recognize that God is one and he does not have any partner and that Muhammad is His messenger. This is the main concern of Islam. Moral and ethical issues are secondary. All the sins can be forgiven. Theft, homicide, murder and pedophilia are forgivable but assigning a partner to God is not.

"Allah forgiveth not that partners should be set up with Him; but He forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth; to set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin Most heinous indeed" (Q.4: 48).

In other words, Saddam Hussein, Idi Amin, Ben Laden, Khalkhali and Khomeini will be forgiven despite all their crimes because they were Muslims and did not set partners to Allah

but Gandhi who was a Hindu and as Muslims claim believed in a multitudes of deities will be burned for eternity in hell.

This Allah must be sick. He is a lunatic and a very miserable being for wanting so desperately to be known by his creatures and being so jealous. If this is the god of Muhammad he is not worthy of any praise but needs to be locked in a mental hospice very urgently.

As to those bad habits of the people that the holy Prophet did not confront directly but tried to deal with them gradually in order to eradicate them, what are they? In our world, pedophilia is a crime. It's a shame that the Prophet did not consider pedophilia important enough to deal with it immediately because it did not contrast the spiritual goals of Islam. But I would have been still happy if I could see that he at least discouraged it. But no, he did not discourage it at all. He actually endorsed it by himself setting the example. This is not the way to "eradicate" something. This is the way to confirm it, to perpetuate it and to promote it.

Prior to Islam, we Iranians were a cultured people. We did not have these barbaric customs and traditions. Thanks to Islam these shameful traditions have also crept into our culture and are being practiced in our motherland.

Pedophilia is only one of the gifts of Islam to us. The holy Prophet endorsed many traditions that are equally despicable. Assassination of one's enemies that is now so customary in our country was also a tradition of the Prophet. He used to send assassins to the houses of his enemies to kill them at night. The honorable members of the Islamic Regime of Iran are following that tradition of the messenger of God (peace be upon his immaculate soul)